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Fact Sheet: About Foot & Ankle Surgeons

Specialists in Total Foot and Ankle Care

Podiatric foot and ankle surgeons are physicians who specialize in the surgical and nonsurgical treatment of a variety of conditions that affect people of every age.

A podiatric foot and ankle surgeon holds an advanced degree as a Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM). Podiatric medicine deals with the bones, soft tissues, and function of the foot and ankle, as well as how podiatric conditions may relate to other parts of the body.

Foot and ankle surgeons provide a wide range of care—from nonsurgical methods to correct common podiatric problems to state-of-the-art corrective and reconstructive surgical techniques.

Why Choose a Podiatric Foot and Ankle Surgeon?

Intensive, focused training and in-depth experience are what set apart the podiatric foot and ankle surgeon from other physicians.

During their education and training, podiatric foot and ankle surgeons devote more time to a wide variety of foot and ankle procedures than do other surgeons. Because of this critical difference, podiatric foot and ankle surgeons are the most appropriate specialists to promptly diagnose and treat various foot and ankle conditions.

A podiatric foot and ankle surgeon must complete four years of podiatric medical school and three years of a surgical residency program in foot and ankle surgery. This residency is like — and integrates with — residencies for all physician specialties. During their residencies, DPMs receive training in internal medicine and general surgery in addition to their focus on the foot and ankle.

When Should You See a Foot and Ankle Surgeon?

Most people have a foot or ankle problem at one time or another. So, how do you know when to see a foot and ankle surgeon?

Sometimes it's obvious that you need to seek help, but at other times it's less clear.

Many symptoms — even those you can tolerate — may require professional attention to keep the underlying condition from worsening.

Some reasons patients see a foot and ankle surgeon, include:

- An injury (a sprain, broken bone, etc.)
- Swelling in your foot or ankle
- A medical condition (diabetes, poor circulation, etc.) that can affect the feet
- Impaired ability to function in certain activities



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- Heel pain in the morning
- Any painful condition of the foot, ankle or lower leg
- Discomfort after standing for a while
- Changes in the appearance of your foot or ankle
- An abnormal growth

Foot and ankle surgeons treat all symptoms and conditions affecting the foot and ankle, such as bunions, heel pain (plantar fasciitis), flatfoot, foot or ankle arthritis, sports injuries, tendon disorders fractures (broken bones), diabetes complications, ingrown toenails, neuromas, dermatological conditions, tingly feet, hammertoes, and much more.

If you would like more information regarding this topic, contact Shoal Creek Foot & Ankle Center by phone at (417) 622-0648 or visit www.shoalcreekfac.com.